



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

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TO A NARRATIVE FORM:
ANECDOTES IN
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AND THE HISTORY OF
CENSORSHIP**

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM
WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: LITERARY STUDIES

WP BRP 23/LS/2017

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The study explores the narrative structure of Alexandr Nikitenko's diary, one of the core sources for the history of Russian censorship, and on the role of the genre of anecdote in particular. Through an analysis of the 'anecdotal' entries about censorship in Nikitenko's diary and their evolution (their number peaks during the years of Nicholas I's reign, and plummets in the parts of the account dealing with Alexander II, particularly in the period of 1860-ies), the authors demonstrate the peculiarities of the 'anecdotal' frame in picturing the interactions between literary circles and censorship. The literary form of anecdote, whose strength is in picturing singular oddities and excesses, fails to account for the everyday quality of routine practices, the day-to-day modes of interaction between authors and censors, so that the 'anecdotal' narrative can only work as a segment of a more complex and multidimensional vision of how literary agency and censoring authorities interacted.

Key words: the history of censorship, Alexander Nikitenko, narrative forms and patterns, ego-documents

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³ The article was prepared within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2016–2017 (grant № 16-01-0066) and supported within the framework of a subsidy granted to the HSE by the Government of the Russian Federation for the implementation of the Global Competitiveness Program. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Arkadiy Avdokhin and Petr Budrin for their generous assistance in translation and library references.

Introduction

Ever since its first publication⁴, the diary of A. V. Nikitenko has been one of the core sources which students of Russian censorship rely on. The diary provides every sort of insight into the workings of censoring authorities, patterns of decision-making, intricate interactions between censors themselves as well as with authors. Such insights — particularly those shedding light onto the complex backroom deals going on in the cloak-rooms of censoring committees — quite often fail to surface both in official reports and correspondence, and are preserved exclusively in this diary. Nikitenko held a range of censorship-related offices; he served on numerous panels during the time of reforms of censorship; a number of high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Education, as well as renowned writers, were intimate with him and held him as a confidant⁵. A shrewd and erudite observer, Nikitenko is typically seen as a trustworthy and well-informed source.

It stands to reason that the editors of the diary and researchers using it have raised the question of just how much reliability the document has. However, the scholars asking this question have been primarily interested in the narrow issues of textology and factual correctness: to what extent the now-lost original of the diary can be recovered in the version edited by Nikitenko's daughter Sophia; how genuine is Nikitenko's writing and whether or not he purposefully distorted historical facts⁶. The narrative form of Nikitenko's notes has attracted much less scholarly attention⁷. It should be self-evident, however, that the pattern of narrating used is far from being innocently irrelevant for the insights culled from the diary's entries. Both the selection of things to tell and the framing of them in a particular manner are preconditioned by authors' choice of a narrative form. In the present study, we will discuss how the narrative genre of anecdote works in Nikitenko's diary, as this genre is most tightly linked with the history of censorship.

⁴ Initially published in excerpts in the *Russkaya starina* (1888–1892), the full version of Nikitenko's diary first came out in 1893 [Nikitenko 1893], later in a more completed edition, with a commentary by M. Lemke [Nikitenko 1904–1905], and, finally, in a series of literary memoirs in 1955 [Nikitenko 1955–1956]. The latter is considered to be the most reliable and competent publication of the diary. For an English — precise, but abridged — translation, see [Nikitenko 1975].

⁵ For biography and major characteristics of Nikitenko's cultural activities and literary works, see: [Shtein 1902; Prokopenko, Kulakova 1998; Krasnov, Shchemeljova 1999; Sterkhova 1999].

⁶ See [Aizenshtok 1955: XXXIII–XLIV].

⁷ Cf. the works and articles dedicated to the diary and the problems of Nikitenko's self-representation [Zotov 1893; Berezina 1996; Kulakova 1999; Rosliakova 1999; Berezina 2000].

The genre of anecdote and its role in the history of censorship

The anecdote is arguably the most common form of literary representation of the history of censorship in the 19th century in the sources beyond official records. The letters, diaries, memoirs, epigrams and satirical writings which deal with censors brim with amusing, and amazing, accounts of the exceptional caution, overdue vigilance, and the absurd tackle of literary texts by censoring officials — from a common clerk to the emperor⁸. The popularity of the anecdote among memoir writers is apparently not the only reason for this; the peculiar literary features of the genre and how it frames a story of facing censorship by a man of letters should have much to do with how large the anecdote looms in the surviving accounts.

One of the hallmarks of the anecdote as genre is its ability to ‘conjure up an unlikely incident’ while picturing it as a real — indeed quite likely — event⁹. In this perspective, the anecdote grasps perfectly well how the bigger part of the literary community would feel about censorship. On the one hand, dealing with censors would form part of everyday routine of an author. At the same time, this type of transactions would hardly ever be made publicly known, both following the internal regulations enforced by censors themselves and given the natural reluctance to reveal the intricate modes of interactions in which authors, publishers, and censors were involved¹⁰. The ‘no-dialogue’ framework typically presented in an anecdote (see [Kurganov 1997: 31]) would ideally suit as a representation of the entanglement between the writing community and censorship which most authors would accept as reasonably true to life. The literary form of the anecdote, as it were, seals censors off from the field of literary enterprise and brings them into a dramatic contrast with authors, while the distinctions in reality would much less clearly cut.

Nikitenko’s diary offers ample glimpses of how ‘anecdotal’ narrative of censorship would be approached and shaped. Nikitenko, while considering himself ‘a reconciliatory figure for both parties’ ([Nikitenko 1955–1956: II, 72], entry from 11 March 1859) — i.e. the general public and censoring authorities — and aspiring to seek ‘harmonization between the interests of the public and the state’, to a large extent buys into the ‘anecdotal’ frame in picturing the interactions between literary circles and censorship. This fact casts a long shadow on his self-representation.

⁸ See e.g. [Tsenzura v Rossii 2003].

⁹ On poetics and structure of the literary anecdote in the 18th – early 19th centuries, see [Kurganov 1997: 30–31].

¹⁰ Cf. [Bodrova 2010], a case study of everyday interaction between the editor and the censors of the *Muscovite* (“Moskvitianin”) in 1841–1844.

When looking at the ‘anecdotal’ entries about censorship in Nikitenko’s diary, one cannot fail to appreciate that their number peaks during the years of Nicholas I’s reign, and plummets in the parts of the account dealing with Alexander II, particularly in the period of 1860-ies. While certain temporal synapses — especially the 1840-ies — do come across as predominantly a collection of amusing and odd accounts of censors’ activities, the developments of the 1860-ies are recounted in a somewhat dry manner, providing details of only the key decisions made by censoring authorities and commenting on their possible reasons. To a degree, this may be explained by an editorial intervention: the extant text of the diary is only available through the copy made by Sophia Nikitenko with publication in mind (see [Aizenshtok 1955: XXXIX–XLIV]). She may have omitted those entries which treat mockingly and non-complimentarily her father’s friends from the 1860-ies — the very period when she had been a grown-up person with set opinions, as she would have her own recollections of these people. It is, at the same time, difficult to suggest that she should have been able to edit out purposefully the anecdotal accounts from this part of the diary while leaving them in earlier parts. It looks therefore as a more natural option that the sudden drop in the number of anecdotes has much to do with an authorial decision and perspective.

An ‘anecdotal land’: the censorship in Russia under Nicholas I

In order to approach the reasons why Nikitenko should have felt compelled to paint the history of censorship in the epoch of Nicholas I as a selection of anecdotal stories, we will seek to establish which accounts from the lot of the diary entries the author stylizes as such. Let us consider the well-known entry from 16 March 1834:

Sidonsky told me about the persecution he was subjected to by the monks (meaning Filaret) on account of his book *Introduction to Philosophy*. I also heard an amusing anecdote from him about how Filaret complained to Benkendorf about a line in Pushkin’s *Onegin*. Describing Moscow, Pushkin says: “and a flock of jackdaws on the crosses”. Filaret found this insulting to things holy. The censor, who was summoned for an explanation, said that jackdaws, as far as he knew, really did perch on the crosses of Moscow churches, but that in his opinion it was not the poet and the censor who were guilty here, but rather the Moscow Chief of Police, for permitting this. Benkendorf replied to Filaret politely, saying that this matter wasn’t worthy of intervention of such a respectable clerical personage.

We look at the education as an overseas monster: bear spears [рогатины] are directed at it from everywhere; it’s no wonder if it gets mad.

[Nikitenko 1975: 46–47; Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 139–140]¹¹

¹¹ For this episode in Pushkin’s interactions with Metropolitan Philaret. see [Proskurin 2012: 116–121].

Alongside the generic features of the anecdote which present themselves in the above account, the conclusion drawn from it (which is to an extent comparable to the moral of a fable) is revealing. The anecdote works within the diary as a means to highlight the negative stance towards education on part of the government and the church.

The second anecdote Nikitenko deploys as such — in the entry from 6 January 1846 — alongside censorship engages with the issues of education in the district of Saint Petersburg at large. It also serves to illustrate the lamentable condition of the ‘education level in contemporary Russia’:

The new superintendent doesn’t understand anything about censorship and keeps ranting about too much liberalism in Russian literature, particularly in the journals. Most of his attacks are reversed for the Notes of the Fatherland. Fortunately, he doesn’t carry any weight here because it’s not he who does the censoring.

[Nikitenko 1975: 107; Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 297]

For Nikitenko, this state of affairs in education is a digression from the natural logic of the historical process. It is this illogical, marred condition of what should be the orderly and rational train of developments in history that Nikitenko sees as a ‘nasty anecdote’. He makes this explicit in the entry from 25 February 1853, where an entire string of anecdotes is preceded by a discourse on how impossible it is to drive backwards the stream of cognition and enlightenment; the set of anecdotes vividly showcases how censorship strives to achieve exactly this thing:

The actions of the censorship department are beyond belief. What do they want to achieve by this? Stop the process of thinking? It’s like ordering a river to reverse its course. Here are the most recent examples of thousands of such instances. Censor Akhmatov halted the printing of an arithmetic textbook because a series of dots had been placed between the figures in some problem. He suspected the author of some sort of hidden design.

Censor Elagin would not approve a passage in an article on geography which stated that dogs were used for transportation in Siberia. He justified his action by saying that this information had to receive preliminary confirmation from the ministry of internal affairs.

Censor Peiker would not approve a meteorological table where the dates of the month were indicated by both the old and new systems according to the usually accepted formula:

old style

new style.

He demanded that the formula be reversed, with the words “new style” appearing above the line, and “old style” below.

The censors shift the blame for their absurd behaviour on the secret censorship committee, and they speak of it as an ogre who threatens to punish them for every printed word.

[Nikitenko 1975: 134; Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 362–363]

It is hardly a coincidence that Nikitenko presages many of the anecdotes he goes on to tell with musings on the weird, unlikely, unfathomable quality of the developments he recounts. Ultimately it is Nicholas I's Russia that is presented as an anecdotal land — erratic and lying beyond the rational in an attempt to escape history's overarching, universally shared drive forward:

What a fantastic place is our Russian land! For 150 years we feigned a yearning for education. It seems this was all sham and pretense, for we are bolting backwards faster than we have ever gone forward. An amazing, fantastic land! When Buturlin proposed closing the universities, many considered this impossible. Simpletons! They had forgotten that one couldn't close what never was really opened. Now, for example, that very same Buturlin is serving as chairman of some higher censorship organ (not the Chief Censorship Committee), and he operates in such a way that it is becoming utterly impossible to write or publish anything at all. Here's a recent example.

Dal was forbidden to write. What? Yes, Dal, that intelligent, good, noble Dal! Could he, too, have become a communist or socialist? Two of his stories were published in the *Muscovite*. One is the story of a gypsy-thief in hiding who cannot be found even with the help of local authorities. Buturlin asked the minister of internal affairs if its author wasn't the same Dal to his office and reprimanded him for spending his time composing literature rather than office documents, and, in conclusion, told him to choose between writing or serving.

But that wasn't the end of it. Buturlin presented this matter to the emperor in the following form: Although Dal's story does inspire the public with distrust of the authorities, this was evidently not his intent, and since his work is generally harmless, then he, Buturlin, would suggest a reproof for the author and a reprimand for the censor. A resolution followed: "to reprimand the author as well, in view of the fact that he, too, is a civil servant".

([Nikitenko 1975: 117; Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 312–313];
entry from 1 December 1848)

Personal input and individual agency are pictured as fundamentally marginal in Nikitenko's anecdotes. Both authors and censors fall victims of the overall condition in this country, which is pernicious for them personally as well as for Russia on the whole. The narrative frame of anecdote comes in handy again: the unpredictable and rapid flow of events can be easily projected wider as a universal breach of human expectation, as an act of an unfathomable, grotesque inhuman agency. Thus the extensive entry from 12 December 1842 contains an account of an emperor's censoring resolution developing entirely beyond Nikitenko's, as well as his fellow censors', expectation and understanding. It proves equally baffling also for L.V. Dubbelt, Managing Director of the Third Section and a member of the Chief Administration of the Censorship:

An unexpected and absurd episode which deserves a detailed account. Yesterday morning, around noon, I returned from my lecture <...> and worked in my study <...>. Suddenly a gendarme officer appeared and graciously asked me to pay a visit to Leonty Vasilievich Dubbelt. "Probably something to do with censorship", I thought, and immediately headed for the The Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancery.

On the way I mentally sorted through all my censorship dealings and searched in vain for a solitary blunder. In the course of ten years I had managed to acquire a certain acumen, but I was now hopelessly lost in guesswork.

The officer who had come to fetch me inquired about Kutorga's apartment, for he, too, was ordered to appear before Dubbelt. This meant that trouble was brewing for us over Notes of the Fatherland.

I arrived in the chancery before Kutorga; he arrived half an hour later. We were taken to Dubbelt.

"Oh, my dear gentlemen", he said, taking our hands. "How distressing it is for me to see you concerning such an unpleasant case. You'll never guess why the emperor is displeased with you".

With these words, he opened the No. 8 issue of Son of the Fatherland and pointed to two passages marked off with a pencil. Here they are, from Efebovsky's story, The Governess. He described a ball at the home of a government official in Peski: "May I ask you, what's so bad about the figure, for example, of this courier with his splendid, brand-new aiguillettes? Since he considers himself a military man and, even better, a cavalryman, Gospodin courier is fully entitled to consider himself attractive when he rattles his spurs and twirls his mustaches, which are smeared with a wax whose rosy smell pleasantly envelopes both himself and his dancing partner..." The other objectionable passage: "an ensign from a construction unit of the Engineer Corps, wearing enormous epaulettes, a high collar and a still higher tie..."

"And that's it? I asked Dubbelt.

"Yes", he replied. "Count Kleimmichel complained to the emperor that his officers were insulted by this."

I was so noticeably relieved, that Vladislavlev remarked:

"It appears that you are very pleased!"

"Yes, I am" I said. "I was very upset until I learned what we were being accused of, Because of the complexity and difficulty of censorship, we could easily have overlooked something and given cause for punitive measures. But now I see that this case is like a lump of snow falling down on you from some roof as you chance to be walking along the sidewalk. There are no precautions one can take against such punitive measures because they are beyond reason, beyond the sphere of human logic".

[Nikitenko 1975: 87–88; Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 252–253]

The 'anecdotal' portrayal of censorship, as the above passage makes clear, is strongly profiled as a piece of satire. The closing phrases of the account evoke almost verbatim Herzen's remark in the *My Past and Thoughts* when describing an unexpected visit of a policeman solicited by A. F. Orlov (the Chief of the Third Section): 'In Russia, a policeman making his appearance is like a piece of tile falling on your head' [Herzen 1956: 221]. Herzen, of course, would not be aware of the contents of the unpublished diary by Nikitenko. The closely overlapping wording is, however, characteristic: the shared logic of anecdotal narrative of the ludicrously flawed social order in Nicholas I's Russia brings together both the slighted censor who suffers a demotion and a forced political emigrant, a vigorous detractor of the Russian government.

Evolution vs unpredictability: the epoch of Great Reforms in Nikitenko's Diary

From this vantage, Nikitenko's perspective in the parts of the account which pertain to Alexander II's reign is significantly clarified. In his view, since his inauguration Russia has ceased to be the 'grotesque land'. Drawing projects of state reforms, for Nikitenko, was a return to the natural progression of history. Personal agency is now differently presented in Nikitenko's narratives of censorship: as he sees it, there is a positive change to be gained through individual input. Nikitenko's own endeavours are one instance of such input: he eagerly engages in drawing up projects of changes in how censorship should work. Minister A. S. Norov, in contrast, is pictured as typical in pursuing a failed project of censoring reforms; significantly, however, his story is not framed as an anecdote.

In narrating developments in this period, Nikitenko resorts to anecdotal frames to speak of events which impede the progress forward that. Thus in the entry from 19 November 1858, he addresses the enterprises of the notorious V. N. Panin, who at that time was one of the preeminent supporters of the 'retrograde' policy:

The *Le Nord* has published a vile thing about the two new senators Lamansky and Grevenitz. Count Panin for some reason imagines that this vile thing was definitely reported to the newspaper by a Finance Ministry official, whereupon he asked that Kniazhevitch should inquire which official had done that.

[Nikitenko 1955–1956: II, 45]

The Committee on Press Affairs¹² is the most usual target in the anecdotal narratives. The Committee was a secret organization of which Nikitenko was a member. This is, however, how he describes it: 'Amazing thing! There is no such ludicrous, pointless project which may not be put forward as State's initiative' ([Nikitenko 1955–1956: II, 50], entry from 24 December 1858). Moreover, he draws direct parallels between the Committee and the 'Buturlin's Committee' from the epoch of Nicholas I ([Nikitenko 1955–1956: II, 60], entry from 7 February 1859).

In mid-1860–70-ies the proportion of anecdotal narratives about censorship drops still further. On the face of it, this might seem to defy the pattern we have posited. Indeed, Nikitenko himself describes this time span as a 'reactionary' epoch, which should raise expectations that he goes back to the frame of presenting censoring authorities he developed for Nicholas I's times. The diary's text, however, never confirms this expectation, as apparently Nikitenko sees the 'new reaction' in a different light from the events during the reign of Nicholas I. In his view, the

¹² For the history of the Committee and its organization see [Makushin 2008; Ruud 2009: 109–112].

new ‘reaction’ is a logical consequence of the failures of the government who mismanaged the reforms, and of the society’s lack of responsibility in how it became carried away with radical ideas of social transformations:

What most thinking people have feared has come to pass: a period of reaction is setting in, a turning back.

The emancipation of the peasants was unquestionably a great event. Yet its greatness also consists of the fact that it laid the foundation for other inevitable and equally great reforms. Without this to look forward to, it would have been an incomplete measure. To abandon the liberated masses without the guidance of experienced, educated and intelligent people – is to abandon some to childish ignorance and to plant distrust in others. This would be a big mistake on the part of the government.

([Nikitenko 1955–1956: III, 55]; entry from 5 November 1866)

Besides, in this period Nikitenko increasingly tends to believe that ‘reaction’ is not only a feature of the historical period but rather an integral part of human existence: ‘Such is the economics of the fate that good should be followed by a reaction from evil, while evil is not always followed by a reaction from good, unless one considers ‘good’ that relative demise in the strength of blows which you receive from people and circumstances’ ([Nikitenko 1955–1956: III, 276], entry from 27 March 1873).

In this context, the increasing austerity of censorship — Nikitenko was witness to how the literary society almost entirely submitted to arbitrary judgement of the Internal Affairs Minister — could no longer be presented as an anecdote. The incomprehensible, paradoxical, and odd quality of decision-making was long gone. It is now the position of *both* literary circles and censoring authorities rather than their mutual clash that has come to be seen through the ironic and paradoxical lens. For example, in the post-reform Russia, both structures were likely to be dependent on big businesses:

I. [Arsenyev] was thrown in jail for his debt of twelve thousand. He stayed there for about six months. At long last, his debt was redeemed—who you suppose did that? Major aristocrats and landowners from the English club pitched in the twelve thousand and did the payment on A[rsenyev’s] behalf. Who are the benefactors, you may wonder? The point is that Ilya A[rsenyev] has taken to disparaging the new courts which he does not particularly favour anyway, as they have not once gone after him for slandering and treating them otherwise nastily, all notwithstanding the protection from his patron <P.A. Shuvalov>, who employs A[rsenyev] as devil knows what.

([Nikitenko 1955–1956: III, 95; entry from 23 August 1867])

Comical accounts of censorship, of course, still surface in the diary (cf. e.g. the entry from 26 September 1870 featuring general Shidlovskiy who was entrusted with ‘upgrading’ literary writings, quite against his own inclinations [Nikitenko 1955–1956: III, 182]). The relative proportion of this sort of narratives, however, drops dramatically: even those episodes which would seem to naturally lend themselves to framing as an amusing and unexpected story

do not end up narrated in this manner. Good examples are two misfortunate episodes of censorship which involve the same text and which took place during the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II respectfully. Nikitenko's entry from 5 March 1841 follows like this:

A certain <I. E.> Velikopolsky wrote the drama play *Yaneterskoy* under the pen name of Ivelyev. It is bad; besides, it is immoral and packed with scenes and expressions which are considered obscene to be printed in this country. Quite incomprehensibly, however, it was passed by censor Oldekop. Once the play came out and the minister happened to lay his hands on it, he threw the censor out of his office and ordered all the copies seized and burned. This auto-da-fe took place today at eleven before noon, which I and Kutorga were ordered to bear witness. Here are, however, two noble actions that have ensued: Velikopolsky, on learning about the misery which had befallen the censor on his behalf, offered to the latter 3000 rubles so that he had means to live on while looking for a new position. Oldekop refused.

[Nikitenko 1955–1956: I, 229]

This episode of course possesses the quality of anecdote to a great degree, particularly its ending where the 'good deeds' of the author and censor, who have both suffered, are mutually wiped out. At a substantially later date (5 March 1864) we have the dramatic account of Mr Velikipolsky:

I presented two reports to the Council on Press Affairs: one, on a most absurd drama written by the well-known literary eccentric, Velikopolsky. *Yaneterskoy* had been printed in 1839 with the approval of censor Oldekop, who had not read it. It was immediately taken from the author and burned in my and the late Stefan Kutorga's presence. Now he has decided to publish it again and had presented it for censorship review. The author has assembled in this play all the abominations, all the moral afflictions with which the human race has disgraced itself – thievery in various forms, adultery, a mother acting as a procuress for her daughter, murder, suicide, attempts at incest and the like; and all this was painted in the filthiest colors. He says in the introduction that he has purposely used such striking language in order to deter people from these vices; but it turns out that the vices he describes are not as revolting as his writing. I, of course, wanted to keep our literature from being sullied by this vile work and proposed a ban on its publication, basing my recommendation on the earlier ban. The Council agreed with me completely.

[Nikitenko 1975: 280; Nikitenko 1955–1956: II, 415–416]

The sense of oddity permeating the story is conjured up through the excessively detailed description of the 'most unthinkable drama', while the actions of Nikitenko, as well as other members of the Committee, are shown as thoroughly rational both from a censor's and an author's perspective. The latter is indeed portrayed as protected from the 'shameful involvement with this loathsome composition' by the beneficent Council on Press Affairs. As a matter of fact, the frameworks of the literary society and censorship coexist within a shared logic, and their clash no longer gives rise to the ironically pointed message of an anecdote.

Yet the pattern of representation of censorship through anecdotal narratives proved a much more productive literary frame. Alongside the vast body of memoirs where the experience of dealing with censorship is portrayed similarly to how Nikitenko presented the account of his

work during Nicholas I's reign (cf. [Tsenzura v Rossii 2003: 146–147]), the existing scholarly narrative of censorship follows a broadly similar pattern. Even today, academic accounts of censorship tend to take the shape of lists of rules and regulations studded with separate 'anecdotal' case studies.

Conclusion

While early students of censorship were forced to rely heavily on Nikitenko's diary for historical facts as their access to the body of archived official records would often be limited¹³, today the diary is rather a source of problem-oriented case studies — an approach towards which scholars are prompted by the narrative structure of anecdotes. The search for commentary and contextualization is naturally spurred by a tension-ridden historic situation that seems baffling in the eye of the modern scholar while perfectly grasped in an anecdote's narrative. Clarification of the seemingly mysterious narratives is to be done by carefully recovering the complex network of social and literary actors and fields which are involved in its making.

It is crucial to bear in mind in this connection that the anecdote as a narrative form apparently falls short of giving credit to the other aspect of history of censorship. The literary form of anecdote, whose strength is in picturing singular oddities and excesses, failures of expectations, in its turn fails to account for the everyday quality of routine practices, the day-to-day, less-than-exciting modes of interaction between authors and censors. It goes without saying that this dimension of censorship has already been addressed in numerous studies of social and political history of Russia. In literary studies, however, this approach is still a rarity. The reason is the quite natural desire of scholars to lay more emphasis on the authors' cause within the conflict, in which perspective it makes perfect sense to present interactions with censorship in terms of anomalous, odd proceedings. At the same time, this vantage on the history of censorship is skewed towards a partisan perspective: quite clearly, the 'anecdotal' narrative can only work as a segment of a more complex and multidimensional vision of how literary agency and censoring authorities interacted.

¹³ See e.g. [Lemke 1904: 328–368], where the history of the Committee on Press Affairs is based mostly on anecdotes from Nikitenko's diary.

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